

NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-5503
DAVID LENT/ROME

FEBRUARY 7, 1978

FIGHTING THE TSETSE FLY
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR:

THE AFRICAN CONTINENT IS SITTING ON A GOLD MINE -- IF ONE
VERY SMALL CREATURE CAN BE CONTROLLED OR ERADICATED. VOA'S
DAVID LENT REPORTS FROM ROME.

VOICE:

THE GOLD MINE IS LAND -- TEN MILLION SQUARE KILOMETERS OF IT
-- SPREAD THROUGH THIRTY-FIVE COUNTRIES OF AFRICA. MUCH OF THIS
LAND IS FERTILE. YET, ALL OF IT IS NOW NEARLY TOTALLY USELESS TO
MAN. WHY?

THE REASON IS THE TSETSE FLY. THE TSETSE FLY CARRIES A BLOOD
PARASITE FROM ANIMAL TO ANIMAL. THE PARASITE CAUSES TRYPANOSOMIAS;
-- SLEEPING SICKNESS -- IN LIVESTOCK. SO -- UNTIL THE TSETSE
FLY CAN BE CONTROLLED, HUGE AREAS OF AFRICA CANNOT BE USED TO FEED
MANKIND.

HERE IN ROME, EXPERTS ARE MAPPING OUT A VAST CAMPAIGN TO
CONTROL THE TSETSE FLY. DOCTOR HARRY MUSMAN, THE DIRECTOR OF
THE ANIMAL PRODUCTION AND HEALTH DIVISION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION, EXPLAINS JUST HOW COMPLICATED
THE CAMPAIGN IS:

TAPE: CUT ONE -- MUSMAN

"WHAT WE HOPE TO DO IN THIS WHOLE EFFORT IS TO DEVISE A PLAN
WHICH WILL REQUIRE THE EFFORTS OF MANY COUNTRIES, AGENCIES AND
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO GET SOME SORT OF CONTROL PROGRAM
MOUNTED."

VOICE:

DOCTOR MUSMAN ESTIMATES THAT THE GROUNDWORK FOR THIS VAST BATTLE AGAINST THE TSETSE FLY AND AFRICAN SLEEPING SICKNESS WILL BE LAID WITHIN A FEW YEARS. BUT HE SAYS IT WILL BE MANY YEARS BEFORE THE GOAL IS ACHIEVED.

DOCTOR MICHAEL THOMAS -- THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA OF THE F-A-O-S ANIMAL PRODUCTION AND HEALTH DIVISION -- IS MORE SPECIFIC:

TAPE: CUT TWO -- THOMAS

"THE PROBLEM IS A VERY GREAT ONE AND IT IS NOT GOING TO BE EASY TO HANDLE. IT IS ASSUMED AT THE MOMENT THAT IT WILL TAKE FORTY YEARS TO HAVE RELATIVE CONTROL OF TRYPANOSOMIASIS IN AFRICA."

VOICE:

THE TERM "RELATIVE CONTROL" IS SIGNIFICANT. DOCTOR MUSMAN EXPLAINS:

TAPE: CUT THREE -- MUSMAN

"I SUSPECT THAT IT WOULD BE UNWISE AT THIS MOMENT TO TALK ABOUT TOTAL ERADICATION. I THINK WE OUGHT TO TALK ABOUT AN EFFECTIVE CONTROL PROGRAM WHICH COULD CONCEIVABLY LEAD TO ERADICATION. THERE MAY BE SOME ISOLATED AREAS IN WHICH ERADICATION MAY NEVER BE FEASIBLE. IF THESE AREAS ARE PROPERLY HANDLED, THEY WILL NOT SERVE AS A RESERVOIR OF THE DISEASE FOR SURROUNDING AREAS."

VOICE:

BUT, IN ANY UNDERTAKING, PARTICULARLY BIG ONES -- FIRST STEPS COME FIRST. ACCORDING TO DOCTOR THOMAS THE FIRST STEP IS TRAINING.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- THOMAS

"THE MAJOR THRUST IN AFRICA IS TO TRAIN A NUMBER OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WHO WILL ULTIMATELY HAVE TO SHOULDER THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONTROL OF THE TSETSE FLY AND ALSO THE DISEASE TRYPANOSOMIASIS. WE DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH TRAINED PEOPLE TO HANDLE THE SITUATION IN ALL OF THE THIRTY-FIVE COUNTRIES INVOLVED."

VOICE:

LAST SEPTEMBER THE F-A-O SPONSORED A LEADERSHIP TRAINING SEMINAR IN NAIROBI ATTENDED BY PERSONS FROM MANY COUNTRIES. DOCTOR THOMAS SAYS THE RESPONSE WAS AN INDICATION OF THE BROAD INTEREST OF THE MANY GOVERNMENTS IN THE NEED TO CONTROL THE TSETSE FLY. BUT, INTEREST, HE SAYS, IS NOT ENOUGH.

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- THOMAS

"I THINK ONE OF THE THINGS WE HAVE TO DO IS TO CONVINCE GOVERNMENTS THAT PEOPLE TRAINED IN THIS FIELD MUST RECEIVE ADEQUATE PAY. OTHERWISE THEY WILL SEEK BETTER-PAYING JOBS ELSEWHERE, AND OUR EFFORTS WILL BE THWARTED."

VOICE:

THE QUESTION TO BE DIRECTED TO DOCTOR THOMAS IS: SHOULD MORE BE DONE IN MANY OF THE COUNTRIES SUFFERING FROM TSETSE FLY INFESTATION? AND HIS ANSWER IS THIS:

TAPE: CUT SIX -- THOMAS

"DECIDEDLY. A LOT MORE HAS TO BE DONE AND A LOT MORE WILL HAVE TO BE DONE IF WE ARE TO HAVE SUCCESS. TO JUDGE FROM THE INTEREST MOST COUNTRIES ARE NOW SHOWING, I PRESUME A LOT MORE WILL BE DONE."

VOICE:

IT'S JUST THE VERY BEGINNING OF A VERY LONG BATTLE. BUT THE ULTIMATE REWARD IS WORTHWHILE: FREEING MILLIONS OF SQUARE KILOMETERS OF LAND FOR THE PRODUCTION OF FOOD FOR MANKIND.

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WJL/RTD